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AUTHOR Cleminshaw, Helen; Guidubaldi, John
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ABSTRACT

Although actual or projected satisfaction with parenting is important in determining whether a couple will become parents and how large their family will be, only minimal research has assessed parental satisfaction. The Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi Parent Satisfaction Scale, a 50-item Likert-type instrument designed to measure components of satisfaction related to parenting, was developed from a survey of parents and a review of other attitude instruments. Based on a pilot administration to 35 parents and an examination of the scale by 3 child and family development experts, the scale was revised from 250 to 211 items. To determine concurrent validity, a preliminary version of the scale was administered with four additional measures of marital and life satisfaction. Results indicated that the Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi Parent Satisfaction Scale demonstrated validity with regard to other satisfaction scales. Demographic correlations showed that the scale was related only to single parenting and sex of respondent; these correlations were moderate and limited to spouse satisfaction items. Additionally, a unit scoring procedure was applicable, reliabilities were high, and factor structures showed a high degree of content consistency. (Author/NRB)

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Assessing Parent Satisfaction

Dr. Helen Cleminshaw
University of Akron

Dr. John Guidubaldi
Kent State University

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Recent changes in American family life have sharply alerted a diverse group of professionals to severe changes in socialization patterns of children and life satisfaction of adults. Topics relating to marital separation, divorce, maternal employment, and declining fertility are regularly found in a wide variety of professional and popular publications, and it now seems clear that marital stability and parenting popularity have been severely diminished during the decade of the 70s.

Considering the fact that dependable birth control procedures and abortion are now widespread means of exercising control over fertility, commitment to child rearing has become a conscious willful decision subject to careful analysis of costs and benefits (Beckman, 1978; Bigner, 1979). Actual or projected satisfaction with parenting thus plays a more central role in determining whether a couple will become parents and how large their family will be.

In reference to its impact on socialization of children, parenting satisfaction would seem to be highly related to parenting behaviors. Parents' utilization of reinforcement, corporal punishment, etc. as well as their expenditure of time interacting with their child, appear to be obvious correlates of satisfaction with the parental role.

Despite the rather obvious connection between parents' attitudes toward child rearing and their actual child-rearing behaviors, only minimal research attention has been devoted to assessing parent satisfaction or examining its correlates. Much of the difficulty lies in the fact that we do not have the appropriate instrumentation for measuring affective areas of development (Gordon, 1977; Gordon, Hanes, Lamme, & Schlenker, 1975).

Clearly, the evidence suggests a strong need for the development of a new instrument that can be used to measure the various components of satisfaction related

to parenting. The Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi Parent Satisfaction Scale described in this presentation is a 50-item Likert type instrument designed to meet this need.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Sample Selection

A total of 130 parents, 52 fathers and 78 mothers, comprised the sample in this development study. All were residents of Northeast, Ohio, and the majority were graduate or undergraduate students attending classes at two universities. Spouses and friends of students also served as subjects, and approximately 20% of the sample was generated through distribution of the scale to several churches in the greater Akron area. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for a variety of characteristics describing this sample.

This sample was intentionally quite hetergenous. For example, ages of the subjects ranged from 21 years to 71 years. Educational levels extended from grade eleven to postdoctoral study, and income varied from less than $6,000 per year to more than $40,000 per year. The number of children ranged from six weeks to 39 years. The variation in length of marriage extended from two years to 38 years. One hundred and one participants were married, and 29 were single parents.

Instrument Design

In an attempt to generate items, approximately 100 parents who were also college students ranging in age from 21 to 54 were asked to respond to an open-ended questionnaire. The instrument basically asked two questions as follows: 1) What three factors do you believe contribute to satisfaction in the parenting role? and 2) What three factors do you believe contribute to dissatisfaction in the parenting role? The responses which had the highest frequencies were placed in the initial pool of items.

The work of other researchers (e.g., Schaefer, & Bell, 1958) who had previously devised attitude instruments was reviewed in order to determine if existing items on their tests were relevant to the instrument being developed. A total of 250 items were finally generated through these processes.[1] The items were structured in a state-

ment format. Because the work of Becker and Krug (1965) refuted the assumption that third-person items yield more truthful answers than do first-person items, the items were written in the first person. They were placed in a four-point Likert scale format which included strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree. Items appearing to reflect different categories of satisfaction were randomly placed throughout the test. Each item related to affect with regard to behaviors or interactions in the parent role. Items were phrased in either a negative or positive direction; although the entire test was balanced for directionality. The subjects were instructed to circle the answer which best described how they have felt toward their child or children. A cover sheet which included directions and an background data sheet for the purpose of gathering demographic data were also constructed and attached to the instrument.

This initial product was given to a pilot sample of 35 parents ranging in age from early twenties to late sixties. In addition to responding to the questions, they were also asked to respond critically to the instrument in terms of how relevant they thought the items were to the parent role. Additionally, they were asked to provide suggestions or comments with regard to readability or clarity.

This test was further submitted to three experts in the field of child and family development in order to assess the items for face validity. After a revision on the basis of the input derived from the above sources, a final pool of 211 items was selected for inclusion in the preliminary scale.

Criterion Instruments

In order to determine the concurrent validity of this instrument, four additional satisfaction measures were also administered. These other assessments of satisfaction were used as validity criteria based on the assumption that parenting satisfaction should relate to satisfaction in other areas.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale developed by Spanier (1976) was utilized as an overall measure of marital satisfaction. Two scales developed by Lee (1978) which measure

marital and life satisfaction were also administered. The assessment of life satisfaction was also determined by the use of the Life Satisfaction Index (A) (Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961).

RESULTS

Data were subjected to several analyses, including factor analyses, correlations to determine relationships with demographic data, correlations with criterion measures, correlations between factor scores and unit weighted subscale scores, intercorrelations of unit subscale scores, and reliability calculations for unit weighted scores.

Factor Analyses

Principle Components and Equimax rotations were performed and yielded five factors as described in Tables 2 through 6. The first of these, accounting for 14.81 percent of total variance, was labeled Spouse Support and included items which clearly reflected respondents' satisfaction with the degree of assistance spouses provided for child rearing (Table 2). The second factor accounted for 10.58 percent of total variance and was labeled Child-Parent Relationship. Content of this factor reflected a parent's satisfaction with his or her own relationship to the child (Table 3). Factor 3 accounted for 9.16 percent of total variance was labeled Parent Performance. Content related to parents' satisfaction with the quality of their child-rearing skills (Table 4). The fourth factor accounted for 9.18 percent of total variance and was labeled Spouse Discipline and Control. Content related to satisfaction with the spouse's performance as a parent, particularly in regard to disciplinary matters (Table 5). Factor 5 accounted for 6.87 percent of the variance and was labeled General Satisfaction. Content related to feelings of overall parenting satisfaction, including judgments concerning the worth of the parenting experience (Table 6).

Correlations with Demographic Data

To determine if the scale might be biased when used with certain types of people, correlations with a variety of parent characteristics were computed. Calculations were performed using unit weighted scores for each subscale (Table 7). Scores were

not related to age, employment status, retirement, years of schooling, income, number of children, years of marriage, remarriage, natural vs. adoptive parent status, or religion. They were, however, related to sex of respondent and marital status. Husbands scored higher than wives on satisfaction with spouse support, and married respondents were more satisfied than single parents with spouse support and spouse discipline.

Correlations with Criterion Satisfaction Scale

As presented in Table 8, the four criterion measures show consistently significant relationships with all subscales. Unit weighted scores generally produced higher correlations than factor weighted scores, and subtests varied as expected in magnitude of correlations depending on relevance to the specific criterion. For example, Spouse Support and Spouse Discipline subscales showed higher relationships than the other subscales when marital satisfaction scales were used as criteria. General Satisfaction, on the other hand, related more highly to life satisfaction than it did to marital satisfaction criteria. These results represent strong support for the validity of the subscale and total scores.

Correlations of Unit and Factor Scores

To determine whether unit weighted scores could be appropriately used instead of the more laborious factor scoring procedure, correlations between the two approaches were calculated. As presented in Table 9, the correlations between the two scoring procedures were quite high for each subscale, ranging from .988 for total scores to .728 for General Satisfaction scores. Thus, unit weighting appears to be a satisfactory approach to scoring. Users of the scale may simply add the point total of every item within a subscale to derive subscale scores, and add subscale totals to derive a total parenting satisfaction score.

Table 10 presents means medians and standard deviations for all subjects using unit weights for each subscale and total score. Although norms are not yet available for the scales, these statistics provide, for the moment, a rough comparison index for

for experimental use of the instrument.[2]

Reliability

Unit score subscale and total reliabilities were computed using Cronbach's Alpha. Results indicate quite satisfactory reliabilities as follows: Spouse Support .929, Parent-Child Relationship .856, Parent Performance .828, Spouse Discipline and Control .821, General Satisfaction .761, and Total Parenting Satisfaction .927.

DISCUSSION

This study has addressed a pressing need in assessment of satisfaction with the parental role. Despite previous development of satisfaction scales relating to vocations, marriage, general life conditions, etc., almost no effort has been directed to the issue of parenting satisfaction. Ironically, this appears to be one of the most critical issues facing families today.

The Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi Parent Satisfaction Scale described in this report has demonstrated validity with regard to other satisfaction scales. It was designed to be applicable to all parents, and as the demographic correlations show, it is related only to single parenting and sex of respondent. These correlations are moderate and limited to spouse satisfaction items. Unit scoring procedure is applicable to this test, and it may therefore be used efficiently by any test administrator. Reliabilities are high, and factor structures show a high degree of content consistency. Thus, the authors recommend further experimental use of this scale and the sharing of results. Results from a norming study, currently in progress, will be reported at a later date.

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[1] Acknowledgement is given to Dr. G. W. Peterson for his contribution of several items to the original item pool.

[2] The authors encourage users of this instrument to share their results by correspondence with Dr. Helen Cleminshaw, Schrank Hall South 215, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio 44325.

TABLE 1

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

VARIABLE	N.	Mean	Median	SD
1. Age of respondent	130	38.76	38.64	10.57
2. Employed (1) vs not employed (2)	130	1.18	1.09	.51
3. Retired (1) vs not retired (2)	130	1.96	1.98	.19
4. Years of Schooling	130	15.92	15.89	3.55
5. Family income	130	13.55	13.64	5.98
6. Husband (1) vs wife (2)	130	1.62	1.69	.60
7. Number of children in family	129	3.40	2.33	5.31
8. Married (1) vs not married (2)	130	1.06	1.03	.24
9. Years of marriage	130	16.26	15.75	8.17
10. Married before (1) not married before (2)	130	1.90	1.94	.30
11. Natural parent (1) vs adoptive parent (2)	130	1.06	1.03	.24
12. Non-Protestant (1) vs Protestant (2)	130	1.59	1.65	.50
13. Caucasian (1) vs Negro (2)	128	1.08	1.04	.27
14. Citizen USA (1) Citizen other (2)	129	1.02	1.01	.12

TABLE 2

FACTOR I (SPOUSE SUPPORT)

Var.	Question	Factor Loading
190	I feel good about the amount of involvement my spouse has with my children.	0.824
196	I am happy about the amount of interest that my spouse has shown in the children.	0.813
194	I am pleased with the amount of responsibility my spouse has taken for raising the children.	0.810
206	I am satisfied with my spouse's childrearing skills.	0.765
186	I am satisfied with the amount of time that my spouse can give to my children.	0.744
9	My spouse usually does not help enough with the children.	0.701
105	My spouse thinks parenthood is an important and valuable part of life which pleases me greatly.	0.700
188	My spouse has sufficient knowledge about child development which seems to make him/her feel comfortable as a parent.	0.696
187	I wish my spouse could do a better job parenting.	0.692
39	I wish that my partner would volunteer more to do things with the children.	0.676

Sum of Squared Loadings = 7.406
Percent of Total Variance = 14.81%

TABLE 3

FACTOR II (CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP)

Item	Question	Factor Loading
51	I am satisfied with the way my children treat me.	0.691
57	I think that my children do not like me very much which greatly upsets me.	0.655
50	My children are usually a joy and fun to be with.	0.638
146	I am pleased with the amount of love and affection I receive from my children.	0.629
69	I think my children would consider me to be a good parent.	0.611
20	I am delighted with the relationship that I have with my children.	0.562
44	My children's cooperative behavior pleases me greatly.	0.548
119	I am dissatisfied with the way I express love to my children	0.527
135	My children add variety to my life which is stimulating.	0.508
124	My children annoy me too much in front of my friends.	0.309

Sum of Squared Loadings = 5.292
Percent of Total Variance = 10.58%

TABLE 4

FACTOR III (PARENT PERFORMANCE)

Item	Question	Factor Loading
3	I wish I did not become impatient so quickly with my children.	0.754
36	I am upset with the amount of yelling I direct towards my children.	0.730
154	I wish I were more consistent in my parenting behaviors.	0.716
59	Sometimes I feel I am too critical of my children.	0.660
137	I feel uncomfortable with the way I often discipline the children.	0.636
11	I wish I were a better parent and could do a better job parenting.	0.558
52	I am satisfied with my child-rearing skills.	0.513
74	I wish I gave my children more individual attention.	0.497
139	Sometimes I feel I should provide more supervision for my children.	0.425
90	I am satisfied with the amount of time I can give to my children.	0.295

Sum of Squared Loadings = 4.578
Percent of Total Variance = 9.16%

TABLE 5

FACTOR IV ((SPOUSE DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL)

Item	Question	Factor Loading
35	All my spouse does is yell at the children which displeases me.	0.795
89	My spouse confuses me and the children by changing the rules too often.	0.756
185	I feel uncomfortable with the way that my spouse often disciplines the children.	0.672
210	I wish that my spouse did not become impatient so quickly with the children.	0.521
182	I am delighted with the relationship that my spouse has with the children.	0.501
203	I wish my spouse displayed more consistent parenting skills.	0.491
19	It pleases me that my spouse is never too busy or disinterested to listen to my children's problems.	0.422
58	My spouse is a perfectionist and expects too much from the children.	0.403
43	Generally my children obey my spouse and this pleases me.	0.357
108	My spouse's parents gave him/her good advice on how to be a good parent.	0.227

Sum of Squared Loadings = 4.089
Percent of Total Variance = 8.18%

TABLE 6

FACTOR V (GENERAL SATISFACTION

Item	Question	Factor Loading
150	Being a parent has brought me a lot of work and heartaches.	0.533
49	Having children causes many problems between a husband and wife.	0.493
162	The most difficult years of my marriage have been the child-rearing years.	0.481
118	I think my children will be a source of comfort and security in my old age.	0.477
143	My children's sense of humor amuses me.	0.474
18	All the efforts a parent makes for his/her children are worthwhile in the long run.	0.431
32	I think my children will always contribute to my happiness.	0.405
122	Overall, I am not happy being a parent.	0.293
107	I can't wait until my children grow up and move out.	0.280
54	It pleases me that my children have kept me feeling young.	0.266

Sum of Squared Loadings = 3.436
Percent of Total Variance = 6.87%

TABLE 7

UNIT SCORE
CORRELATIONS WITH DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Unit Scores	Age	Employment	Retired	Yrs. of School	Income	No. of Child.	Husband vs. Wife	Married vs. Unmar.	Years of Mar.	Prev. Mar.	Nat. Parent	Religion
Spouse Support	-.146	-.069	-.045	-.049	.094	.002	-.269**	-.328**	.012	-.014	.072	-.066
Child-Parent Relations	-.111	.013	-.069	-.035	.029	.034	.073	-.029	-.013	-.053	.019	-.163
Parent Performance	-.100	-.002	-.032	-.009	.085	.060	.035	-.046	.049	-.106	-.004	-.076
Spouse Discipline	-.038	-.081	-.123	-.067	.065	-.027	-.057	-.276**	.076	.054	.085	-.040
General Satisfaction	-.058	.066	-.131	-.033	.011	.005	.141	-.104	-.043	.032	.006	-.084

TABLE 8

CORRELATIONS OF UNIT SCORES AND FACTOR SCORES
WITH CRITERION SATISFACTION SCALES

	SPOUSE SUPPORT		PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS		PARENT PERFORMANCE		SPOUSE DISCIPLINE		GENERAL SATISFACTION		TOTAL TEST	
	Unit Score	Factor Score	Unit Score	Factor Score	Unit Score	Factor Score	Unit Score	Factor Score	Unit Score	Factor Score	Unit Score	Factor Score
Life Satisfaction (Lee)	.225**	.090	.621**	.479**	.334**	.191*	.399**	.240**	.550**	.332**	.564**	.596**
Life Satisfaction Scale (Neugarten)	.256**	.146	.467**	.306**	.343**	.233**	.355**	.180*	.506**	.348**	.518**	.542**
Marital Satisfaction Scale (Lee)	.537**	.462**	.211*	.095	.106	.005	.474**	.261**	.214*	.082	.455**	.405**
Marital Satisfaction Scale (Spanier)	.555**	.457**	.215**	.056	.166	.070	.530**	.336**	.270**	.129	.507**	.469**

TABLE 9

CORRELATIONS OF UNIT AND FACTOR SCORES

	Factor Scores					
	Spouse Support	Parent/ Child Relation	Parent Performance	Spouse Discipline	General satis-faction	Total
Unit Scores						
Spouse	.944**	.078	.115	.240	.112	.666**
Relation	.153	.849**	.295**	.203	.254**	.784**
Performance	.073	.132	.924**	.056	.290**	.660**
Discipline	.459**	.152	.032	.822**	.211*	.749**
General	.129	.529**	.136	.091	.728**	.721**
Total	.552**	.438**	.408**	.398**	.415**	.988*

TABLE 10

UNIT SCORED MEANS, MEDIAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SUBSCALES AND TOTAL SCORE

	N	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Spouse Support	130	30.44	30.77	6.04
Child-Parent Relationship	130	32.20	31.86	4.06
Parent Performance	130	25.45	25.65	4.63
Spouse Discipline	130	29.97	30.42	4.62
General Satisfaction	130	31.15	31.13	4.07
Total Score	130	149.22	148.25	16.86

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